



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT
3170 EAST MAIN STREET
CANON CITY, COLORADO 81212



FRONT RANGE RESOURCE ADVISORY COUNCIL MEETING
CANON CITY, CO
May 10-11, 2006

MINUTES

Group 1

Virginia Patton
Gene King
Jim Coleman
Chuck Rech
Rick Thompson

Group 2

Lucy Bambrey
Larry Strohl
Aaron Clark
Donna Murphy
Josh Osterhoudt

Group 3

Loren Whittemore
Michael Bush
Frances Mathews

RAC Members not in attendance: Jim Bensberg and Joseph Duda.

GUESTS: Ellen Cesarone , Congressman Hefley's Colorado Springs office; SeEtta Moss, Arkansas Valley Audubon Society; Jim Lockhart, Sierra Club; Greg Sundstrom, Colorado State Forest Service; Pat Lyon, Quiet Use Coalition; James Culbertson; Roz McClellan, Rocky Mountain Recreation Initiative, Vera Smith, Colorado Mountain Club and Cliff Tucker, Rocky Mountain Trials Association.

BLM/FS PERSONNEL: Roy Masinton, Ken Smith, Jim Rhett, Dave Walker, Marilyn Schuyler, Tony Edwards

COUNCIL BUSINESS: Roy gave an update on nominations; The nomination period ended March 27, there were 8 nominees for the 5 positions. The Secretary will make appointments by August 21.

PUBLIC COMMENTS: SeEtta Moss, Arkansas Valley Audubon Society complained about the way she was treated by board member Jim Bensberg at the last meeting. She also commented that recreational use should be done in a way that is viable and sustainable for the public lands and if that can not be done in that way then it should not be permitted. **Jim Coleman** and other members apologized on behalf of the RAC for the way she was treated. **Roy** on behalf of BLM also apologized to SeEtta.

Jim Lockhart, Conservation Chair, Pikes Peak Group of the Sierra Club in Colorado Springs; spoke out against the request by the Rocky Mountain Trials Association and their plans to have more trials events on Public Lands and to have a year-round area to practice. This seems to be inconsistent with BLM's other policies of restricting motorized use to designated routes.

Roz McClellan, Rocky Mountain Recreation Initiative, works on motorized recreation issues from a conservation stand point considering how to have more environmentally responsible recreation policies. The motorcycle trials activity does not work unregulated on BLM land along the Arkansas River. The use needs to be on designated routes and should be consistent with “Stay the Trails.” This goes against where motorized use needs to be going and this RAC could come up with a precedent setting approach to this difficult activity.

Roy stated if anyone has creative ideas that are applicable to the management of public lands - BLM would be interested in getting them in writing.

MANAGERS UPDATE:

Tony Edwards, USFS Pike and San Isabel: Fire restrictions have been signed and are moving forward with a planning rule and plan on using the new 2005 rule. The OHV rule which is 6 months old will be completed by 2009. They have been given direction that by 2009 they are going to have a system of trails and roads that are specifically for motorized use that will be mapped. Whatever is on that map for motorized trails or motorized roads becomes what is allowed for access. Roads will be signed to match the map. The challenge is many miles of roads have historical use and have never been formally adopted into the Forest system.

Tony also mentioned the Recreation Enhancement Act. The Forest Service has a couple of cabins they would like to bring forward for discussion and are ready to rent for the public’s use and the preservation of the cabins.

Jim Rhett, San Luis Valley: They have been in discussions for some time with a company that is involved with wind energy generation. They put up a meteorology tower test site on BLM land in the southern part of Pinon Ridge almost 3 years ago. About a year ago they wanted to put up 2 more sites, one in a WSA not far from the 1st site and the other was in an area critical to environmental concern just north of the WSA. Both of those verbal proposals were rejected. They have come back this year to renewed the discussions and yesterday there was a meeting with their representatives who went over why those sites were inappropriate and ended by looking at some other sites on BLM land. A field trip is planned for May 23.

The Travel Management Plan is still on schedule. They are looking at having the Final out next month and having a decision by September.

The alfalfa board is meeting next week about the damage to alfalfa fields. There is potential for a call for extended grazing seasons on public lands to help off-set the forage problems that could be generated because of a reduction in alfalfa.

There have been discussions for some time about setting up a police and law enforcement shooting range on the east side of the San Luis Valley. They are looking into acquiring some grants to help build it.

The Conejos Peak Ranger District will be completing its Travel Management Designation under the OHV rule in 2007, Divide Ranger District will be completed in 2008 and Saguache in 2009. For several years they have had a TMP in place and there are a few roads that should be on this that are not. They are in the Forest Management Plan. The San Luis Valley roadless area designations meeting is scheduled for June 7 in Monta Vista.

Paul Crispin, San Carlos District Ranger: The current drought has had an impact on the grazing programs on this side of the mountain. Like the San Luis Valley significant changes will need to be made to how permittees will utilize grazing allotments. Across the board reductions have not been made and they will look at each allotment individually.

Roy Masinton, Royal Gorge Field Manager: Stage I fire restrictions are in place and there is a Single Engine Air Tanker and retardant plant at the Fremont County Airport.

Salida Ditch Update: Between BLM, Army Corp of Engineers and the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment there is an agreement and the Ditch Company is cooperating in restoring the steep bank they created.

Over the River: The NEPA document is being contracted by JF Sato. It remains to be seen if we will do an EA or an EIS. The public issues that have come out of the comments are public transportation, emergency issues, wildlife impacts, fire response and socioeconomic impact.

Grazing Regulations: Royal Gorge Field Office staff is currently looking over the New Grazing Regulations and at the present time there is not a significant difference from what we have had in the past. Drought issues are dealt with on a case by case bases. A drought letter has not been sent out this year because there has not been a lot of restocking of ranches. Presently there are about 4 grazing trespasses.

Ruby Mtn/Pike Update: As a follow-up to the Ruby Mountain site situation with Mr. Pike, he filed an appeal to the Interior Board of Land Appeal (IBLA) and BLM was upheld. Mr. Pike then asked the IBLA to reconsider their decision without giving them any additional information. His request was denied.

After lunch the RAC went on the Motorcycle Trials Field Trip with Dave Walker.

Day 2 – May 11, 2006

The Colorado Division of Wildlife had notified Larry Strohl they would no longer support his time on the RAC. As a result he resigned from the Council and this will be his last meeting.

Motorcycle Trials Event Discussion, Dave Walker

Roy Masinton asked the Council for their recommendation on how BLM should proceed with managing trials events and practice areas.

The RAC reviewed a copy of the special use permit that was issued for the trials event at Turkey Rock. The stipulations that Rocky Mountain Trials Association (RMTA) is required to follow and the standard stipulations for commercial, competitive and organized groups were also reviewed by the RAC.

Once BLM has the application in hand, they consider the use requested. If appropriate, it is authorized. The current travel management planning process will eliminate all open designations on public lands within the planning area, everything would be limited. Depending on the decision, BLM would either designate specific routes or designate a given area for that type of activity.

One of the things talked about at the last meeting was whether this activity was appropriate for Public Lands and if BLM should continue to provide opportunities for holding motorcycle trials events on public lands? At the last meeting, the Council recommended that opportunities for holding trails events continue to be considered, subject to the stipulations included in the special recreation use permits that are issued for the events.

Another question for the RAC to consider: If motorcycle trials events are permitted on public lands, should the events be allowed to expand into new areas; should the events be limited to the existing three areas or should the events be limited to a single area?

In discussions with RMTA, having 4 sites is one of their desires. This would allow them to hold their events on 2 of the sites one year and on the other 2 sites the next year.

After a lengthy discussion among the RAC members 3 motions made:

#1 Aaron Clark motioned to: Designate Turkey Rock as the only area for year around Trials Events and as a practice area. The motion was seconded by Donna Murphy, but did not pass.

There was discussion about the motion stating Turkey Rock would be the only location for trials events and practice, but for other areas to be open to trials events it would need to be amended to include other areas.

#2 Frances Mathews motioned to designate Turkey Rock as an area for Trials Events and as a year around practice area. The motion was seconded by Michael Bush. This motion passed.

After further discussion the # 2 resolution was amended to read:

#3 Amended Resolution: Designate Turkey Rock as the only area to be used as a year around trials practice area, while Turkey Rock and other appropriate areas may continue to be considered for trials events. The motion was seconded by Frances and passed unanimously.

Access Policy Discussion, Dave Walker

Dave Walker commented as a general policy BLM is not going to allow private motorized access to public lands but there are cases where in order to achieve certain management objectives BLM may have to allow private access from private lands.

The RAC reviewed the proposed Guidelines for Managing Access between BLM and Private Lands and after discussion, Jim Coleman motioned that the RAC approve the guidelines, Gene King seconded and the motion passed unanimously. The Resolution reads: The Front Range Resource Advisory Council supports the Guidelines titled “Royal Gorge Field Office – Guidelines for Managing Access between BLM and Private Lands.

Brunch

Recreation Enhancement Act Power Point Presentation, Jack Placchi

The Federal Lands Recreation Enhancement Act (FLREA) was passed by Congress and then signed into law by President Bush on December 8, 2004. The Act authorized the Secretary of the Interior and Agriculture to establish, modify, charge and collect recreations fees at Federal recreation lands and waters.

Benefits to Visitors are reinvesting a majority of revenue back to the site of collection, establishing an interagency pass program, providing more opportunities for public involvement in determining recreation fee sites and fees and providing focused criteria and limits on areas and sites where recreation fees can be charged.

Three fee categories are identified for the U.S. Forest Service and BLM. They are Standard Amenity Fees, Expanded Amenity Fees and Special Recreation Permit Fees. To implement the Act, there is a requirement to establish Recreation Resource Advisory Committees.

To create another RAC to review these fee increases would have to go through the Federal Advisory Committee Act and get a charter and that could take 1 to 1 ½ years to get that accomplished. One of the potential strategies is to use existing RACs for both the BLM and U.S. Forest Service.

Gene King is concerned that the RAC does not have the proper representation to form a Recreation RAC Subcommittee.

Roy asked the Council if BLM asks them to expand their responsibilities to include these additional Recreation RAC duties, are they able to take on the additional workload and travel that would be needed.

Donna Murphy made the suggestion that this RAC ask BLM to go back and look at this and see what is the most streamline method of creating a RAC subgroup.

After some discussion, the Council decided to wait until they hear what options are available, hopefully by the next meeting, and do an assessment of what is most efficient.

The next meeting is July 26 & 27, 2006 in the San Luis Valley.

The meeting was adjourned at 3:30 p.m.

Roy L. Masinton
Royal Gorge Field Manager
Bureau of Land Management

Loren R. Whittemore
Chairman
Front Range Resource Advisory Council